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THE absence of a colored plate this month is owing to the unavoidable delay of lithographing. The great amount of detail upon the plates now being prepared, has taxed the energies of the lithographic artist to the utmost, and demanded an attention and care which forbid haste in the preparation.

We trust that next month there will be no cause for a repetition of these explanations, and we confidently believe the beauty and usefulness of the designs we have in hand will compensate for the delay. It may, perhaps, be well to call attention to the fact that the colored plates now being prepared are not merely samples or patterns of wall decoration, but, more properly, illustrated art lessons, or object pictures, showing the coloring and the styles of ornamentation that were used by each of the most prominently quoted nations of antiquity.

In lieu of our colored plate we give an original work by a well known firm of this city, consisting of two pages showing a complete scheme for fresco painting of wall and ceiling, which pages are, so far as our knowledge extends, a new departure in the field of Decorative Journalism.

THE lack of unity or purpose is one of the serious faults with modern taste, and in seeking beauty many forget that it is dependent upon harmony of details. There is no more forcible illustration of this disregard for the fitness of things than in much of the prevailing architecture, where we have retained the peculiarities of the various styles and epochs, but in separating them from the surroundings which called these peculiarities into existence, their faults are made prominent, and their crudeness apparent. The placing of a Grecian temple in the midst of the White Mountains would be most inappropriate, because the locality and the ornamentation would not be, in any way, suited to each other, and though the artistic talent might be of the highest order the result would be a failure.

Inconsistencies almost as bad, however, are frequently perpetrated in our modern cities.

So in our decorating, the notion of beauty is often separated from that of fitness; we see something in our foreign travels that enchants us with its outlines, and it is transferred to our home, or at any rate is imitated, but when we see it away from the associations that gave it life, mingled with objects with which it has no affinity, its charms are lost, its grace becomes grotesqueness, or its delicacy is turned into coarseness.

Let us, then, in our furnishing, look more to the harmony between ensemble and detail.

THE third and concluding chapter of Mr. Luther Hooper's interesting review of the life and works of Benvenuto Cellini, is unavoidably omitted in this issue. Mr. Hooper's manuscript reached us after our paper was on the press, and too late to re-open its columns.

ART EDUCATION.

THE fact must be admitted, sooner or later, that the art workmen of this country can never hope to compete with foreigners, if the present system of instruction is continued, and the present development of imaginative art, at the expense of practical art, is encouraged.

Let any one who questions this extreme view study Mr. Koehler's recent United States Art Directory, and note the discouraging apathy toward the useful, and the universal approbation of the "pretty."

Mr. Koehler enumerates 187 artistic societies in the country. Of these, 170 are devoted exclusively to painting, and 17 to the so-called arts of design. These arts of design are divided among the 17 as follows:

China painting exclusively, is taught in three; drawing from casts, flower and fruit painting, embroidery and china painting in six; landscape, figure and out door sketching in five; wood carving in one, fresco designing in one, and carriage designing in one. One of these had taught wood carving but thought best to relinquish it.

Of the colleges, the University of California instructs its pupils in landscape painting; Bowdoin confines its art teaching to contemplating the masterpieces of Raphael, Rubens and the like; Harvard gives a full course of Ruskin, Von Reber, Sir Joshua Reynolds and other lights; Cornell thinks so much of architecture that it utilizes a Rev. to teach it, and it is sufficiently liberal to have specimens of stained glass decorations from Europe in its museum; Yale devotes a great deal of energy to Italian art, while Columbia is rich in plaster casts and landscapes in crayon; Syracuse University exhausts itself on landscape gardening; the Illinois Industrial University incidentally enumerates metal work in one course, and its School of Art and Design consists of three males and one female, who are waiting to study from the nude.

Can we ask for any more than we have with such a showing as this? Can we expect industrial progress upon a foundation of china painting, or intellectual development on a basis of embroidery? Will clerical instruction in dentils and pentiles qualify an architect to design bedsteads and cabinets?

Not a solitary school in Mr. Koehler's entire catalogue includes furniture designing in its curriculum, and but a single college gives any attention to metal work. The students are kept upon a highly intellectual training in ministerial linear measure, or taught carpet designing by a theoretical professor, and their designs are submitted to the manufacturers, who frankly say they are thoroughly impracticable.

Artists, as a class, are among the most gifted and impecunious of the professional workers; the first by nature, the latter by an education which tells them to dream of Cleopatra and Greece and Rome and Lake Como and Michel Angelo, and starve, in place of turning their talents into a practical channel and hiding them, as they term it, in designs. They envy Rubens and do nothing, forgetting that there was but one Marie de Medicis to order paintings by the yard, and, in fact, only one Rubens to paint them. Pictures which sell for a fortune are scarce, and painters to execute them still more scarce, but there is a field open to designers, and though the majority may never become the equals of Adams, Chippendale or Talbert, they will all have a much better prospect of making a living, than in the continued pursuit of an uncertain fame as a copyist from nature.